Popular Fiction, the stuff we read, including genres like Science Fiction and Fantasy, are in our own language. Other language and national groups have their own development of similar literatures. This exhibit explores some of the long history of Russian fantasy and science fiction, some of which has become popular here as well.

Multifaceted authors Osip Senkovsky and Prince Odoevski of the early 19th century used fantasy as one of their literary outlets. In the early 20th century, science began to be an important element in fiction, leading to the genre we know today as science fiction.

Alexander Bogdanov, a Russian revolutionary, used science fiction to create his “utopia” in Red Star, written in 1908. In the Soviet period, this literary genre sometimes took on political dimensions as a way of writing about topics not possible in a repressed society. It was also used as pro-Soviet propaganda and as a method of indoctrination for the young. And some of it was just good fun.

The Strugatsky brothers brought Soviet science fiction to a wide audience outside of the Soviet Union. Since the end of the Soviet period, science fiction is one of several popular fiction genres that has exploded onto the scene.

Sandra Levy
Associate Slavic Librarian